Multiple Intelligences

Chapter 1 Response:

This chapter was sort of a refresher to our class on Thursday. Each of the eight intelligences has been described in more detail though, which I liked. I think it is important for every teacher to be aware of all eight intelligences and ways of catering to each style of learning. I realize that every person is unique, and that everyone learns differently. It may even be accurate to say that no two people have the exact same learning style; it is like a fingerprint, unique to each of us. As I continued to read, it was said that everyone possesses all eight intelligences, and most people can develop each intelligence to an adequate level of competency; which I find to be a good thing. Having to learn how to teach to eight different intelligences, or create lessons that will cater to all would impact my class a lot, but knowing that almost every students has a little of each makes it a little easier. This will also force me to make some students step out of their comfort zone once in a while, which isn’t always a bad thing. The only fear, for lack of a better word, I have about how this will impact my classroom is the fact that, until Thursday I had no idea what my intelligence was, so this probably means a lot of my future students won’t know either, so it will be my job to also show them this. What makes me nervous is, if they aren’t sure, how can I be sure?

Chapter 2 Response:

This is the chapter I needed! The heading “Developing Your Multiple Intelligences” is exactly what I hope to do. My main intelligence is Visual/Spatial, which was tied with Verbal/Linguistic, but I hope to be knowledgeable in all eight of the intelligences. I thought the “crystallizing experiences” and “paralyzing experiences” were very interesting concepts. They make sense, reading the paragraph I tried to think of subjects I really enjoy and subjects I could not care less to engage in; then tried to think of any experiences that made me like or dislike them. This is definitely going to impact me in the classroom (as a teacher), I don’t ever want to be a student’s “paralyzing experience”. I will make sure to be very conscious of my actions. I am definitely going to use this as a guide, it is full of useful advice that I can use when I feel stuck with a student or my own teaching method. Knowing that environmental influences can promote or suppress the development is a very important note to keep in mind. I knew that family life and other things like that impacted who we are, but I never thought about it influencing the actual way we learn and are intelligent. I guess I thought it was something we were born with. Knowing this, my classroom will definitely be impacted by who my students truly are. I will need to get to know my students personally, who they are outside of class, and furthermore, outside of school, to make sure I am benefiting them as learners and people.

Chapter 3 Response:

This chapter is all about how you, as a teacher, can describe a student’s most developed intelligences. This will allow a student’s learning in school to take place through their preferred intelligences. However, this being said, it is also important not to “pigeon-hole” a student into one intelligence, this is because most students have strengths in multiple areas. Towards the beginning of the chapter it mentioned keeping a notebook or journal to write down observations of your students’ learning techniques. There is no “megatest”, as the book described it, that provides a comprehensive survey of your students, however a formal test could be useful in determining their intelligences. Many tips were given as means to figuring out a student’s intelligences, they include looking at school records, talking to parents or other teachers, setting up activities, and asking the students. The chapter brought up misbehavior too, and how they could be more of a cry for help than a means of getting attention. Students want to learn in a way that they are comfortable with and they will do so. I need to make sure I fully understand this and need to learn how to tell the difference between a student acting out because they are trying to learn in a way they are comfortable and a student acting out for attention. Keeping a journal was a pretty good tip that I think I will find to be very useful. I don’t want to punish a student who is really just trying to learn in a way they feel more comfortable learning, but I also don’t want my other students distracted by another student’s behavior.

Chapter 4 Response:

Chapter four described ways teachers can use all eight intelligences in their classroom. It is important for students to learn about the eight intelligences. I think that there are many students who don’t really know what intelligences they possess, but at the same time, they know the intelligences they struggle with. Once a student finally realizes their main intelligence they can be more successful in the classroom and out of the classroom as well. It can help their teachers too! If a student knows what works and what doesn’t and they can explain that they learn in a specific way because of their learning style being one of the eight Multiple Intelligences. When a student can talk to their teacher about this it will help the teacher form a learning plan specific to that student. I really enjoyed the line, “all of you are intelligent—and not just in one way. Each of you is intelligent in at least eight different ways.” The reason I liked this a lot is because I think it is important for all students to know they are smart, even if they don’t think they are. Everyone has a specific intelligence, everyone is capable of learning and being smart. I think there were many great examples of ideas a teacher can propose so students can learn what their intelligence is. Some ideas included field trips, biographies, a human intelligence hunt, and more. These are all great ideas that will my students as well as myself.

Chapter 10 Response:

 This chapter (ten) of Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom tackled the debate of standardized testing versus authentic assessment.  I, personally, do not like standardized tests, I somewhat despise them.  The book gave a great example of why exactly I do dislike standardized tests so much.  On page 136, an example is given of a standardized test question format compared to a more authentic question format.  The question was, "Choose the word that best describes Huck Finn in the novel:" it then went on to list four possible choices of an answer, one of which I am sure no high school student has ever heard of, because I myself have never heard anyone use it either.  It also gave two answers that most likely could be used to describe Huck Finn and one answer that is easy to identify as the wrong answer.  It is like we set the student up for failure.  The authentic assessment examples are given in such a way that students have an option in which they can demonstrate their understanding.  Why not allow this for every student every time we test?  The word test seems to scare some students, and the fact that so many things rely on these so called test scores.  I can think of a few teachers who made it out to be that if I didn’t do amazing on my SATs that I would not get into to college and therefore I would not get a well-paying job, and therefore, I would basically be working at a fast food joint for the rest of my life.  I believe that many teachers have told many students this and it is time it has stopped.  Mastery should be demonstrated in whichever way a student feels comfortable, this is because mastery is to know an art or skill form; would you take a standardized test over how to draw?  No, you would draw something.

Chapter 7, 9, 13, and 14 Response:

Chapter seven of Thomas Armstrong's "Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom" is titled MI Theory and the Classroom Environment.  As you can see from the title, this chapter is all about promoting the usage of MI Theory as a way to structure your classroom in a way that appeals to all students.  The chapter describes ecological factors of learning through each intelligence, as well as "MI Activity Centers".  Creating MI activity centers is a way of restructuring your classroom to create "intelligence-friendly" areas which allows all of your students to explore and find their niche.  I thought this was funny because all I could think of was my Kindergarten class, which was set up in this way, with multiple stations.

Chapter nine, titled The MI School, this chapter focuses on the full integration of MI Theory into the school, not just select classrooms. This would be an entire school that caters to the student based off their specific learning style (based off this theory). Although I do think this is a brilliant idea, I do think that it is going to take some time to start integrating this method into classrooms then an entire school. I think that offering one or two classes that really cater to each learning style would be very beneficial. There would be a lower drop-out rate, students would be excited to come to school; even the students that say they hate school. It may just take on or two classes to open their eyes to the possibilities of learning being fun and/or fascinating. I think Mount Blue has been trying to do this with their Foster Tech school.

The use of computer technology, cultural diversity, and career counseling were main points in chapter 13, Other Applications of MI Theory. It discusses how computers are “intelligence-neutral mechanisms”, which I had never really thought about, but it’s true. It also gives you a bunch of examples in Figure 13.1 that caters to individual learning styles. It also gives you many examples of each, because within each intelligence, you are going to have different interests that students will have. This chapter also gives examples of jobs specific to individual intelligences. I will just note as well, that “teacher” shows up an six of the eight intelligences, school principal was on one of the two that did not have teacher listed, and only one had intelligence style had no form of a school type job. Just thought that was interesting.

The idea of a ninth intelligence, which was the discussion topic of chapter 14 (MI Theory and Existential Intelligence), sort of made me laugh; only because Existential Intelligence is based off the “concern with ultimate life issues”. This is where I want you to just stop and think about this for a minute. A **concern** with ultimate *life issues*, really think about that; I’m sure we could say we all have, some people more than others, but now think about how long you have been learning with your specific intelligence. What I’m getting at is, many of us have been learning a certain way for as long as we can remember, so to think of an five-year-old as having the Existential Intelligence is almost terrifying to me, but not surprising. We are now living in the time of the “helicopter parent” which is the parent who is always hovering, when their child is hurt it’s always an emergency whether it is a broken arm or merely a papercut. We are creating children who are/will become stress cases. At age you should be carefree, there should be little to no stress, thinking of what you’re going to get for snack, not thinking of ultimate life issues.